



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

SOME CONDITIONS OF EXPRESSION IN THE SCHOOLROOM.

IT is not many years ago since the very idea of expression in the schoolroom was practically new. The old-time view was logical and simple. What could the child express, what could he think? Had he not come to school to learn, and not to teach? His place was to receive, and the only object of having him say or do anything was to see whether he had received what the teacher intended he should. A step farther on teachers found out by experience that saying and doing things on the part of the pupils not only formed a test, but that it actually increased their receptive power. This insight became crystallized in the maxim: "Expression is impression." This, however, and the movement back of it, still take impression as the real aim, while expression is related to it as a means. Since this is so, we are forced to ask: In what sense does expression which is thus subordinated succeed in being expression at all?

Let us look at it first from the standpoint of adult life. Suppose a person speaking to you is doing so only in order to impress what he is saying on his own mind, would you feel that what he was saying was really an expression? If I, in writing this little article, only desired to impress the ideas on my own mind, where would there be any expression, except perhaps of an accidental nature? No, an expression to be an expression must be intended as such by the person who makes it. Let us look, then, at this intention and what makes it up. Any intention is, of course, essentially an attitude or act of will, but the particular one of expression always involves some other person or persons. In this little article I may have misinterpreted my audience, but I am certainly thinking of a definite kind of person. In any expression the person to whom it is directed is as important as the content of the expression; in other words, the idea of the person spoken to is a condition of and determines the expression itself, not only in its form, but also in its content.

Everything cannot be said to everybody. Cast no pearls before swine, not only because it is wasteful, but also because it is hard on the teeth. There may be nothing wrong with the swine.

To what extent does the idea of the person or persons spoken to further or retard expression as it is found in school? There are two typical situations in view of which this may be considered: (1) The pupil is addressing the teacher, and has him or her in mind while he frames his speech, drawing, written exercise, or other sign. During this he may realize that he is being overheard by the rest of the class, although frequently this enters into his mind so slightly as to be almost inefficient in action. (2) The idea of the class or certain members of the class may become important, and what he is saying is really addressed to them and measured by the effect it produces upon them, whether the teacher be formally addressed or the class addressed directly, sometimes as also including the teacher. These two types of reaction are capable of shading into one another, and in certain conditions one extreme as well as the other can be shown to be justified. As one observes most recitations, however, there seems to be a very marked preponderance in one direction. In one school, for example, which I observed for a week, I found 97 per cent. of all the questions asked propounded by the teacher, and the 3 per cent. asked by the pupils never leading to any further development. No one can fail to admit that a very large number of the recitations made are directed in intention to the teacher.

When recitations from lessons previously learned by the whole class are used, this is necessarily so. In such cases the aim of the pupil is to impress the teacher with the excellency of his reproduction. The idea in itself is indifferent to him. He does not feel that he is communicating anything, since the teacher is supposed to know beforehand everything he is saying. Although going through the motions of social participation, he is in reality a picture of isolation. To say to him, "Speak so that the class will hear," or "Turn to the class," is but to deepen the irony of the situation. The mechanical excellence of the reproduction is the only expressible reality left him.

There are, however, forms of recitation in which nothing has been previously given in order to be learned, where the same unworthy hollowness exists. This is particularly true of the "development method" used by many (perhaps only "so-called") Herbartians. To see the story of *Robinson Crusoe*, e. g., "drawn from" pupils who have never previously heard it, would give one a weird feeling of the power of infant logic, if the illusion were not so plain. Given the conditions—lonely, desert island, favorable climate, etc., etc.—different imaginers can make very different stories, one just as logical as the other. In fact, the children do offer all kinds of propositions, some of them delightfully childish. There comes to mind the answer of a child who, being asked what material she would use for building, said she would need some nails. Where would she get them? "At the grocery store." "But there is no grocery store." "Oh, I would go on till I found one."

Not logical from a narrow adult standpoint, but very real and natural. Practical enough, too, if the possibility of error is recognized as human. More than that, it is really logical. Our modern writers on this subject, if they have done anything since the time of Mill, have at least convinced us of the importance and, from one standpoint, of the ultimacy of induction, which means essentially the testing of a mere "working hypothesis" by the facts of experience. To find by such experience that the hypothesis is wrong is just as educative and just as logical as to find that it is right. No, it is not by the children's own logic that *Robinson Crusoe* is "developed." It is by means of the Jove-like (and also Juno-like) teacher's nod. It is a simple device: the teacher accepts those answers that are "right."

What does this condition of affairs make of expression? Although the teacher may fondly suppose there is in this a discussion, it is not really so. The aim of the pupil is simply to find out what is in the teacher's mind, not to communicate or to develop what is in his own. He does not intend to address the class, but the teacher, and the only reason for hearing what anyone else may say is in order that he may not use over again the same particular notion. It may be asked, however, if this

is not really an exercise in induction? It certainly is, but it is the teacher and her hints and expressions that are studied, and not the subject. At this point thinkers who commit the same fallacy as Arnold Tompkins, *e. g.*, cut the Gordian knot. They say in effect: "But we realize that the subject of the lesson is always the subject as it exists in the mind of the teacher, whether he be represented personally or by a text-book. It is self-activity all the same, and the business of the pupil is to study this self-activity and make it his own, however it may be deposited.

This is only one side of the truth, but when the pupil honestly thinks it the most worthy thing for him to do so to study the teacher or the text-book it is then also the whole of the truth for that particular situation; but what goes to make it thus is the fact that the pupil freely, or with a consciousness of freedom, planned it so himself. If the teacher has the skill to make what is in his mind so necessary and interesting that the pupils feel they need to get it, this is a perfectly legitimate and honest relationship. It is one, however, in which the teacher expresses himself, and not one in which the pupil expresses himself. But even from this standpoint, whatever is true of the higher schools, no one can doubt that for a large part of the time there is no such feeling on the part of pupils in the elementary and grammar schools. It is because of this that tricks or "devices" are used to make an apparent or temporary necessity and an apparent interest sufficient to hold the pupils in the presence of the teacher. If pedagogy consists in the detailing and the classifying of such methods, it is certainly the footpad of the moral sciences, and teaching becomes the polite art (with a good deal of coercive force back of it) of holding up the children.

No, as everyone sees, there must be real, not simulated, willingness. But can anyone suppose that a willingness simply to find out what is in the text-book or the teacher's mind can persist for five hours, and including home work for ten hours a day? Shall we then cut the hours shorter? That does not follow. On the contrary, why not give a real chance to the

other side, the individual-pupil side of life? A child wants sometimes to give as well as to get, to do someone else some good, or even some harm or annoyance if nothing better. It is tiresome to go through the mere motions of expression, and to fail so often of the reality. At last one gets a little paralyzed and does not care; sometimes adopts the school attitude, when on no account one reads out of school anything even remotely like what he reads in school, or in the effort to understand the process as a whole turns it into a drama with one's little friends, usually a comedy in spite of the elements of tragedy contained. To those of us who feel with children it does not seem as if this is all that childhood has a right to have.

On the contrary, there must be expression in the school, and it must be real. Such expression must be meant to be a communication, and therefore framed with the view of some other persons in mind. These conditions seem impossible with both the so-called development method, as usually applied, and with the old-fashioned text-book and lecture method. Of the two the text-book or the lecture is at least more economical and direct.

Now, so long as we regard the subjects of study on the school program as already completed, and therefore, to be learned, the pupil must submit himself to the text-book or the teacher. Any real expression on his part is not only secondary, but idle. Such work should be wholly planned out, administered, and executed by wiser heads. To leave mere details of plan to the pupils, as to the private in the ranks, does not change the plan. The details are supposed to be foreseen by the wiser heads. If we are logical, we may even see that with such an ideal, the fewer the pupils the better; or, in other words, the finer the grading the better. One pupil in a grade would be the best, but since this is practically difficult on account of the expense, approximate it as much as possible, as does, for example, Superintendent Search. Such a course, too, would be much more perfectly adapted, if we only knew the exact mental and physical condition of every pupil beforehand; or, lacking this, at least such a previous knowledge of the average pupil of various ages, or a refined knowledge of the stages of growth. In a word, as educators we

would attempt to predict everything beforehand, scientifically and accurately. Now, given that we have a pupil who merely wants to learn what is in the teacher's mind or in the text-books, it would seem as if the rest of it might be previously planned; but this is only on the assumption that we already know the pupil's plan. If it is a very simple one, namely the getting of whatever ideas are presented to him, and the reproduction of these, I suppose we can run a certain kind of school on these lines. Poverty-stricken as this idea of the pupil is, it is very largely the idea that governs the conduct of the present American school, although we are by no means responsible for its inception, but have inherited it weakly from the past, long after the rights and needs of the individual have been appreciably vindicated in other spheres. Even in such a helpful book as Professor DeGarmo's *Interest*, we are not advanced beyond the thought that the school life should essentially consist for the pupil of "self-welcomed problems," leaving it entirely to the teacher to propose these problems, and presumably to know the answer beforehand. Most of our books on pedagogy contain the presupposition of self-activity. The way this is taken, however, is much as indicated above, viz., the assumption that we are dealing with a pupil who desires in a general way to learn, or who keeps to the simple plan of getting ideas that are presented to him, and possibly reproducing them with accuracy. Should the pupil want to do something else, this kind of self-activity is ruled out of pedagogy. As a result, we find the books on teaching really dealing with what the teacher should do at best, on the supposition of the above simple plan of the pupil, at worst as to how he may be persuaded or compelled to confine himself to such a plan in action at least. The contrast between such treatment of self-activity and that of certain modern writers on this state is truly remarkable. Of this Bosanquet might be taken as an example, when he shows that the essential duty of the representatives of the state is summed up in the maxim, "Prevent hindrances," thus assuming that things are going on even without these representatives, and that the self-activity of the citizen is real and evolutionary.

Now, it will be said that this is just the point, viz., that there

is an essential difference between citizens and children who are not citizens. This may be so for the state. But what is the school? Is it not simply an institution for the training of citizens? This has now become such a commonplace that we fail to interpret it in the light of our present ideas of citizenship. Here let me emphasize one point only, which is already that of President Eliot. Why train a child to habits which he is not intended to use when he grows up? And why omit the training of habits which he is expected to use? No training in mere obedience and in mere receptivity will ever give a pupil the virtues of real self-reliance, resourcefulness, expressiveness, and self-government.

Here we may remark that the self-government referred to must be concerned with the real work of the school or of those in the school. We do not recognize this to be in all cases the situation when pupils are called in to "govern themselves," for the sake of issues which are planned by the teacher. Here the self-government has nothing to do with what is taught and only amounts to policing. It is only when work is actually willed and planned by the pupils, or in as far as it is planned by them, that any real self-government can arise, and, as we have seen, this is also a condition for any real expression. We must either deny self-government and expression in the school or be prepared to admit that pupils in their own personalities, full of real desires, whether these give rise to whims or wise plans, must be permitted, encouraged, and aided in bringing these out, and in realizing them to the fullest possible extent.

There is no doubt that a considerable body of teachers are already working successfully in this direction. The changes that have come over our school program are very largely a manifestation of such a conception. Domestic science, manual training, industrial arts, nature-study, etc., although sometimes in a state of complete relapse to the mere dictation side of education, are for the most part full of the idea that the child must really feel himself a cause, or a source of plans and projects. Not only here, but in many classes in literature, geography, history, etc., the same idea obtains. The teacher in these cases does get down

to the consideration of some of the real plans and even the whims of the child. She does, in many cases, find the child where he actually is, and, instead of outlining an external logical ideal, helps him to organize his own experience, nearer to his heart's desire. It is only in the light of these facts that I venture to suggest, without much reference to detail, the direction, although not the finished result, to which such experiences seem to point.

To some extent at least the school must be made a clearing-house for real life. The term "course of study" is very variously interpreted. Most clever teachers can drive a coach and four through a pretty rigid course of study, if they think it necessary to do so, although the danger is more prevalent that teachers do not live up to the freedom already involved in the course of study. But if the course of study means what the pupils do in school, then expression and self-government must mean that the pupils make a part or contribute a factor to the course of study. If we regard the time-table as a necessary consequence of the course of study, this would mean the planning either of the whole or a part of the time-table. Now, in as far as the pupil desires and agrees in any given program, his plan is identical with the teacher's. But there would seem to be an opportunity here for some differentiation. A certain properly limited section of the time-table and of the program may be devoted to the freer and larger growth of pupils' plans. What this part of the course of study will be it is impossible to say beforehand. That it will not appear to start off in many cases with geography, history, reading, writing, spelling, etc., would seem tolerably likely, and this may be of itself sufficient to prevent such an opportunity being countenanced by most teachers. The pupil's part of the course is much more likely to start off at the very place he finds himself, and to reflect conditions strictly as they appear to him. His first and necessary step will be to say what he proposes to do. What time he needs, whom he needs to help him, what material he needs, if any, what place he intends to work, what difficulties stand in the way, etc. It may be that such proposals are made to others before they are made to the teacher, but ultimately they must be made to her, as it was from her invitation

as a school authority that the opportunity started, and she therefore must regard herself as a partner in every plan. This gives her naturally the chance to co-operate and even to suggest, so long as she feels sure the pupils are capable of rejecting or vetoing her suggestions. It also gives her the same right of veto, which, of course, must be exercised sparingly and with the best of judgment.

Now, although in the lower grades these pupils' plans do not usually begin under the name of the conventional school studies, experience for the last three or four years with work of this character shows that they involve these school studies and frequently actually advance them in the pupils' minds more rapidly than has been possible in the ordinary way. The pupil finds out that, to carry out many of the things he really wants to do and thinks worth while, he must use numbers, reading, and writing, drawing, etc., in order either to show what he has done (which is generally part of his plan) or to obtain information to carry out his ideas. As for higher grades, I may say that when pupils' planning has been applied in my own classes in psychology or pedagogy, there is no doubt not only as to the reality of the expression, but as to the actually increased rate of scholarship on the part of the pupils.

Space forbids me to enter as I should like into more concrete details. I will finish with one matter of striking importance. Starting with the individual we have found in most cases that he was already in co-operation with others; that is, apart from the presupposed relationship to the whole class and the teacher. A little group is formed, which is sometimes weeded out and sometimes increased. This little group is the organ of the idea; but, on the other hand, the group modifies the idea. Sometimes in such association there is little left of the original idea but the enthusiasm or personal attraction which helped to pull the group together. These groups have all the problems of real self-government, at the risk of going to pieces if unsuccessful, as well as the opportunity of constant discussion and expression within themselves and at more stated periods with the rest of the class. In the higher classes (as in psychology), groups or com-

mittees are used, but are not seemingly so essential. The individual is both more self-sustained and more capable of coming into contact with the whole of the class. Even here, however, there are certain pupils never found at their best unless in the narrower circle of a smaller group.

Some such opportunity of real expression, however it may be expedient to limit it on the school program, is necessary for the best development of future American citizens. The particular form which experience shows already possible is not the only form, or probably the best. Not only must every school, but every class, and every succeeding class in the same grade, pursue somewhat different ideals, but they must also find themselves in different environments, and thus with different means for realizing themselves. In any case, however, and despite the poverty of circumstance, life that is not artificially trammled is always rich enough to incarnate itself anew, continually manifesting itself in the most fascinating varieties of individual and social growth.

COLIN A. SCOTT.

BOSTON NORMAL SCHOOL,
Boston, Mass.